



ELDON HOUSE

NATIVE PLANT HANDBOOK

FUNDED BY TD
FRIENDS OF THE
ENVIRONMENT



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INTRODUCTION

BACK TO OUR ROOTS PROJECT

ELDON HOUSE STAFF BECAME INTERESTED IN INCREASING THE BIODIVERSITY OF THE GROUNDS BY REMOVING INVASIVE PLANTS AND REINTRODUCING NATIVE PLANT SPECIES TO THE GARDENS. IN ADDITION, ADDING NATIVE PLANTS WOULD BECOME A WAY TO DECOLONIZE THE GROUNDS AND BEGIN RECONCILIATION EFFORTS. FUNDING PROVIDED BY TD FRIENDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT ALLOWED US TO TRANSFORM THE EAST GARDEN, WHICH HAS BEEN RENAMED THE 1790S GARDEN, SIGNIFYING AN AREA WHERE EUROPEAN SETTLERS AND HORTICULTURAL PRACTICES INTERMIXED WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND NATIVE LANDSCAPES.

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WHAT IS A NATIVE PLANT?

NATIVE PLANTS ARE THOSE THAT ARE NATURALLY OCCURRING AND HAVE EVOLVED OVER THOUSANDS OF YEARS IN A PARTICULAR REGION. OVER TIME, THESE PLANTS HAVE ADAPTED TO REGION SPECIFIC CONDITIONS (SOIL/WATER/LIGHT), AND HAVE CREATED SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE OTHER FLORA AND FAUNA NATIVE TO THE SAME REGION.



WHY ARE NATIVE PLANTS IMPORTANT?



NATIVE PLANTS FOSTER HEALTHY LANDSCAPES BY PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY. EACH PLANT PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE BY PROVIDING ESSENTIAL FOOD AND HABITAT TO NATIVE ANIMAL SPECIES. THIS, IN TURN, CREATES A HEALTHY ECOSYSTEM THAT IS DIVERSE AND RESILIENT.



WHAT IS AN INVASIVE PLANT?

AN INVASIVE PLANT (LIKE PERIWINKLE PICTURED ABOVE) IS ONE THAT DID NOT EVOLVE IN THE SPECIFIC REGION IT HAS BEEN PLANTED AND HAS SPREAD AGGRESSIVELY. THESE PLANTS PUT ECOSYSTEMS AT RISK BY OUTCOMPETING NATIVE PLANTS FOR SPACE, LIGHT, WATER, AND NUTRIENTS.

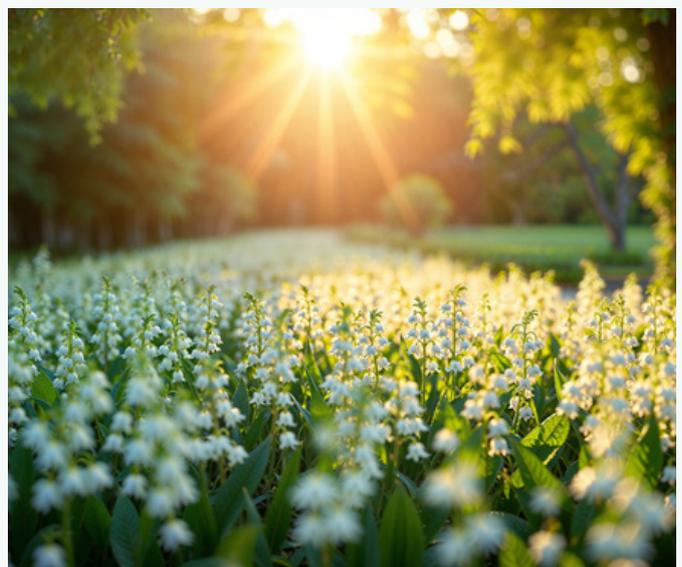
WHY DO GARDENERS LIKE INVASIVE PLANTS?



SINCE COLONIZATION INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES HAVE BECOME POPULAR WITH HORTICULTURALISTS AND TO PRIVATE GARDENERS ALIKE. BUT WHY ARE THEY SO POPULAR?

HISTORICALLY, MANY OF THESE PLANTS WERE BROUGHT TO CANADA BY EUROPEAN SETTLERS WHO WANTED TO PLANT SOMETHING FAMILIAR IN THEIR GARDENS.

IN THE MODERN ERA, MANY PEOPLE SEE COMMON INVASIVE SPECIES LIKE ENGLISH IVY (*HEDRA HELIX*), OR PERIWINKLE (*VINCA MINOR*) AS LOW MAINTENANCE OPTIONS FOR THEIR GARDENS. WHILE THIS CAN BE TRUE, THESE PLANTS NEGATIVELY IMPACT BIODIVERSITY. THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE IS TO PRESENT NATIVE SPECIES ALTERNATIVES TO SOME COMMON INVASIVE PLANTS.



BLACK COHOSH NOT PERIWINKLE



BLACK COHOSH (*ACTAEA RACEMOSA*), ALSO KNOWN AS BLACK SNAKEROOT IS A TALL FLOWERING PLANT. IT REACHES 175 CENTIMETERS TALL WITH A SPREAD OF 90 CENTIMETERS. THE LEAVES ARE A DEEP GREEN WITH TOOTHED EDGES. STRONG TALL STEMS HOLD DRAMATIC FEATHERY FLOWERS THAT ARE CREAM TO WHITE. THE FLOWER PORTION IS MADE OF MANY STAMENS GIVING IT A FEATHER-LIKE APPEARANCE. BLACK SNAKEROOT FLOWERS GIVE OFF A DISTINCTIVE SMELL THAT SOME CLAIM IS LIKE JASMINE, WHERE OTHERS CLAIM SMELLS LIKE BODY ODOR.

WHY IS IT A GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

BLACK COHOSH IS ADAPTABLE TO SHADY CONDITIONS AND DOES WELL IN DROUGHT CONDITIONS, LIKE PERIWINKLE. IT IS AN IMPORTANT FOOD AND LARVAL SOURCE FOR POLLINATORS, HELPING TO INCREASE BIODIVERSITY. IT IS ALSO ATTRACTIVE FOR HUMANS, AS THE PLANT'S ODOR ACTS AS A NATURAL BUG REPELLENT THUS GIVING IT ONE OF ITS COMMON NAMES- BUGBANE!

CANADA ANEMONE **NOT** GOUTWEED



CANADA ANEMONE (ANEMONE CANADENSIS) IS A FAST SPREADING GROUND COVER. IT HAS GREEN TOOTHED LEAVES AND THE SHOOTS OF THE FLOWERS GROW IN CLUSTERS. THE FLOWERS ARE SIMILAR SHAPE TO BUTTERCUPS, WITH DELICATE WHITE PETALS THAT OPEN IN MID-SPRING.

WHY IS IT A GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

LIKE GOUTWEED, CANADA ANEMONE IS A BEAUTIFUL PLANT THAT SPREADS THROUGH RHIZOMES (UNDERGROUND STEMS THAT GROW HORIZONTALLY) MAKING IT A FAST GROWING GROUND COVER. IT DOES WELL IN SUN AND SHADE MAKING IT IDEAL FOR LARGE AREAS. UNLIKE GOUTWEED, CANADIAN ANEMONE FEEDS NATIVE BEE AND BEETLE SPECIES INCREASING NATIVE BIODIVERSITY.

CANADIAN MAYFLOWER **NOT** LILY OF THE VALLEY



CANADIAN MAYFLOWER (*MAIANthemum canadense*) ARE SOMETIMES CALLED FALSE LILY OF THE VALLEY FOR THEIR SIMILAR APPEARANCE. THESE PERENNIALS GROW TO ABOUT 25 CENTIMETERS TALL WITH HEART SHAPED LEAVES. THE FLOWERS GROW IN CLUSTERS OF WHITE FLOWERS WHICH OPEN FROM BOTTOM TO TOP. IN THE MID SUMMER THE WHITE FLOWERS GIVE WAY TO BRIGHT RED BERRIES.

WHY IS IT A GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

LILY OF THE VALLEY IS AN EXTREMELY INVASIVE SPECIES, SMOTHERING NATIVE PLANTS. CANADIAN MAYFLOWER IS SIMILAR IN STYLE AND THRIVES IN DEEP SHADE AND ACIDIC SOIL, MAKING THEM A PERFECT ALTERNATIVE TO OTHER DEEP SHADE PLANTS. THEIR FLOWER CLUSTERS PROVIDE AN EARLY FOOD SOURCE FOR POLLINATORS, AND THE RED BERRIES THAT FORM IN MID-SUMMER PROVIDE FOOD FOR BIRDS AND SMALL MAMMALS.

CANADIAN YEW NOT PERIWINKLE



CANADIAN YEW (*TAXUS CANADENSIS*) IS A SHORT SPREADING SHRUB REACHING A HEIGHT OF 50 – 60 CENTIMETERS AND A SPREAD OF 80 – 100 CENTIMETERS. THE BRANCHES HAVE ROWS OF FLAT, DARK GREEN NEEDLES. SEED CONES FORM ON THE BRANCHES AND DEVELOP INTO A BRIGHT RED BERRY-LIKE FRUIT, CALLED AN ARIL WHICH GENERALLY APPEAR IN LATE SUMMER TO EARLY FALL.

WHY IS IT A GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

LIKE PERIWINKLE, CANADIAN YEW LOVE SHADED AREAS AND ARE TOLERANT OF COLD CLIMATES. THEIR SLOW SPREADING NATURE MEANS THEY ARE EASY TO MAINTAIN, AND THE EVERGREEN FOLIAGE IS BEAUTIFUL ALL YEAR. THE BERRIES ARE A GREAT FOOD SOURCE FOR BIRDS, AND THE FOLIAGE PROVIDES HABITAT FOR ANIMALS IN THE WINTER. CANADIAN YEW ARE ALSO A THREATENED SPECIES DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEFORESTATION. PLANTING CANADIAN YEW INCREASES THE POPULATION AND HELPS STOP THE LOSS OF THIS SPECIES BEFORE IT REACHES THE STATUS OF ENDANGERED.

PENNSYLVANIA SEDSGE **NOT** PERIWINKLE



PENNSYLVANIA SEDGE, (*CAREX PENNSYLVANICA*), IS A TYPE OF FLOWERING GRASS. THE BLADES GROW UP TO 2 FEET LONG AND ARCH AS THEY REACH MATURITY. THE PLANT FLOWERS FROM APRIL-JUNE, PRODUCING A TALL FLOWER CLUSTER, CONSISTING OF A MALE SPIKE THAT IS CREAM TO BROWN IN COLOUR, AND 4-12 FEMALE CLUSTERS BELOW. THE CLUSTERS ARE WHITE WITH A PURPLE BLOSSOM.

WHY IS IT A GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

PENNSYLVANIA SEDGE IS A LOW MAINTENANCE PLANT AND A GOOD ALTERNATIVE TO A TRADITIONAL LAWN, HANDLING MODERATE FOOT TRAFFIC. IT IS ADAPTABLE TO A VARIETY OF AREAS INCLUDING DRY SHADE. THE SEEDS OF THIS PLANT WILL ATTRACT AND FEED BIRDS, AT LEAST 2 SPECIES OF NATIVE BUTTERFLIES, AND 25 MOTH SPECIES RELY ON THIS SEDGE FOR FOOD, HABITAT, AND AS A LARVAL HOST PLANT.

SPICEBUSH **NOT** FORSYTHIA



SPICEBUSH (LINDERA BENZOIN), IS A SHRUB THAT GROWS BETWEEN 6-12 FEET TALL. IT FORMS IN CLUMPS, KNOWN AS THICKETS AND UNLIKE FORSYTHIA, DO NOT SPREAD OUT OF CONTROL. THE LEAVES ARE SMOOTH AND GREEN ON TOP WITH A YELLOW TINGE BELOW, IN THE AUTUMN THESE LEAVES TURN YELLOW. IN THE SPRING SHOWY YELLOW FLOWERS FORM, AND GIVE WAY TO BRIGHT RED BERRIES IN LATE SUMMER TO EARLY FALL, PRESENTING VISUAL INTEREST THROUGH THE MAJORITY OF THE YEAR.

WHY IS IT A GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

SPICEBUSH IS AN ADAPTABLE SHRUB AND GROWS IN SUN AND SHADE. LIKE FORSYTHIA THEY BLOOM IN EARLY SPRING, AND THEIR NECTAR AND POLLEN PROVIDES AMPLE FOOD SOURCES FOR INSECTS. ADDITIONALLY, THE RED BERRIES THAT FORM ON SPICEBUSHES ARE A GREAT FOOD SOURCE FOR BIRDS IN THE FALL SEASON. THIS SHRUB IS A HOST FOR THE SPICEBUSH SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLY. SPICEBUSH YOUNG TWIGS, LEAVES AND BERRIES ARE ALL SAFE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION, WITH THE BERRIES TASTING SIMILAR TO ALLSPICE.

VIRGINIA CREEPER **NOT** ENGLISH IVY



VIRGINIA CREEPER (*PARTHENOCISSUS QUINQUEFOLIA*), IS A FLOWERING VINE THAT CAN GROW TO NEARLY 100 FEET IN ITS NATURAL HABITAT. THE LEAFSTALK NORMALLY HAS CLUSTERS OF FIVE TOOTHED LEAVES ON THE END, AND SMALL TENDRILS BELOW WHICH ARE USED FOR CLIMBING. THE LEAVES CHANGE TO RED AND PURPLE IN THE FALL. SMALL, GREEN FLOWERS FORM ON THE PLANT IN THE SPRING AND GIVE WAY TO DARK PURPLISH BERRIES IN THE LATE SUMMER TO EARLY FALL.

WHY IS IT A GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

LIKE ENGLISH IVY, IT IS A FAST GROWING PLANT THAT THRIVES IN SHADE, AND IS LOW MAINTENANCE. UNLIKE ENGLISH IVY, VIRGINIA CREEPER CLIMBS USING TENDRILS, MEANING THEY CAN GROW ALONG BUILDINGS AND OTHER PLANTS WITHOUT CAUSING AS MUCH DAMAGE. ADDITIONALLY, ITS BERRIES ARE A GOOD FOOD SOURCE FOR BIRDS AND IT IS A LARVAL HOST TO A VARIETY OF MOTH SPECIES.

WHITE WOOD ASTER **NOT** PERIWINKLE



WHITE WOOD ASTER (*EURYBIA DIVARICATA*) IS A LOW GROWING PLANT, REACHING 30 - 90 CENTIMETERS TALL AND WIDE. THIS BUSHY PLANT HAS DENSE CLUSTERS OF HEART-SHAPED TOOTHY GREEN LEAVES AND AN ABUNDANCE OF SMALL, WHITE, DAISY-LIKE FLOWERS THAT COVER THE PLANTS IN LATE SUMMER TO EARLY FALL.

WHY IS IT A GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

WHITE WOOD ASTERS ARE AN EXCELLENT CHOICE FOR ATTRACTING POLLINATORS AND PROVIDING THEM WITH A MUCH-NEEDED FOOD SOURCE LATER IN THE SEASON. THIS PLANT IS A LARVAL HOST TO 2 SPECIES OF BUTTERFLY AND 10 SPECIES OF MOTH. ADDITIONALLY, IT IS A THREATENED PLANT WITH MOST CLUSTERS IN CANADA BEING TOO ISOLATED TO PROMOTE CROSS POLLINATION. PLANTING WHITE WOOD ASTER HELPS INCREASE ITS POPULATION AND CAN HELP STOP THIS PLANT FROM BECOMING ENDANGERED.

WILD GINGER NOT ENGLISH IVY



WILD GINGER (*ASARUM CANADENSE*), IS COMPRISED OF KIDNEY SHAPED LEAVES WITH A VELVETY TEXTURE. IT SPREADS THROUGH UNDERGROUND SHOOTS CALLED RHIZOMES, AND FORMS COLONIES OF LOW GROUND COVER. IN EARLY SPRING, TAN AND PURPLE FLOWERS APPEAR ON THE PLANT. WHEN POLLINATED, THE FLOWERS TURN INTO A POD WHICH SPLITS OPEN TO REVEAL SEEDS WITH FLESHY PROTEINS ON THE END CALLED ELAIOSOMES.

WHY IS IT A GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

WILD GINGER IS A LOW MAINTENANCE GROUND COVER THAT SPREADS QUICKLY AND THRIVES IN PARTIAL TO FULL SHADE. UNLIKE ENGLISH IVY, IT DOES NOT OVERTAKE NATIVE PLANTS OR DAMAGE OTHER SPECIES. IT SERVES AS A LARVAL HOST FOR THE PIPEVINE SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLY AND THE BOLD-FEATHERED GRASS MOTH. THE ELAIOSOMES ARE GOOD FOOD SOURCES FOR FLIES AND ANTS WHICH IN TURN POLLINATE THE PLANT BY SPREADING THE SEEDS AFTER EATING THE ELAIOSOMES.

WILD STRAWBERRY NOT PERIWINKLE



WILD STRAWBERRY (*FRAGARIA VESCA*), IS A PERENNIAL HERBACEOUS PLANT. THE PLANT FORMS STALKS BETWEEN 3-15 CENTIMETERS HIGH WITH GROUPINGS OF THREE TOOTHED LEAVES ALONG THE STEMS. THE STALKS DEVELOP RUNNERS THAT ENCOURAGE THE SPREAD OF THE PLANT. THE FLOWERS THAT FORM IN THE EARLY TO MID SPRING ARE DELICATE WHITE FLOWERS THAT ENCOURAGE THE GROWTH OF BRIGHT RED STRAWBERRIES. SMALLER THAN BERRIES FOUND IN SUPERMARKETS, THESE HAVE A SWEETER TASTE.

WHY IS IT A GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

WILD STRAWBERRIES ARE AN INCREDIBLE SUPPORT FOR INSECTS AND WILDLIFE. THESE PLANTS ARE HABITAT AND LARVAL HOSTS TO OVER 75 SPECIES OF NATIVE INSECTS! ITS BERRIES ALSO PROVIDE A FOOD SOURCE FOR BIRDS AND SMALL MAMMALS, MAKING IT A VALUABLE SPECIES FOR BIODIVERSITY. ADDITIONALLY, IT IS GREAT FOR HOME GARDENERS AS A LOW MAINTENANCE, FAST SPREADING GROUND COVER THAT IS ADAPTABLE TO SUN AND SHADE. ITS FLOWERS, BERRIES AND SEMI-EVERGREEN FOLIAGE ADD INTEREST FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE YEAR.

WINTERGREEN NOT PERIWINKLE



WINTERGREEN (*GAULTHERIA PROCUMBENS*) IS A BEAUTIFUL LOW GROWING PLANT THAT IS CHARACTERIZED BY GLOSSY GREEN LEAVES THAT TURN BRONZE AS NEW GROWTH FORMS IN THE AUTUMN REMAINING VISUALLY APPEALING DURING WINTER. THE PLANT BLOOMS WITH WHITE AND PINK PENDULUS FLOWERS THAT TURN TO BRIGHT RED BERRIES IN THE SUMMER.

WHY IS IT A GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

WINTERGREEN PLANTS HAVE LEAVES THAT ARE A SIMILAR SIZE AND SHAPE TO PERIWINKLE, ALSO THRIVING IN BOTH SUN AND SHADE. IT IS A SLOW GROWING PLANT, WHICH MAKES IT EASY TO MAINTAIN, AND ITS BEAUTIFUL COLOURS ADD VISUAL INTEREST TO A GARDEN IN ALL SEASONS. ITS BERRIES ARE A GREAT SOURCE OF FOOD TO BIRD SPECIES, AND SNAPPING THE LEAVES RELEASES A PLEASANT MINT SCENT IN THE GARDEN.

WOODLAND PHLOX **NOT** PERIWINKLE



WOODLAND PHLOX (PHLOX DIVARICATA), IS A SEMI-EVERGREEN PLANT GROWING BETWEEN 10-25 CENTIMETERS TALL AND SPREADING TO FORM COLONIES. OVAL LEAVES ARE ATTACHED IN GROUPINGS ALONG THE STEM. IN MAY-JUNE BLUE-LAVENDER FLOWERS BLOOM AND RELEASE A PLEASANT VANILLA-LIKE SCENT.

WHY IS IT A GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

WOODLAND PHLOX IS ONE OF THE MOST COMPARABLE PLANTS TO VINCA, OFFERING A LIKE-FOR-LIKE REPLACEMENT FOR GARDENERS. LIKE PERIWINKLE, IT ALSO THRIVES IN PARTIAL TO FULL SHADE AND WITHSTANDS LIGHT FOOT TRAFFIC. THE FLOWERS WHICH FORM IN EARLY SPRING ARE A NECTAR SOURCE FOR BUTTERFLIES, MOTHS, AND HUMMINGBIRDS.

MORE RESOURCES

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT NATIVE PLANTS AND THEIR IMPACT VISIT THE FOLLOWING LINKS:

IN OUR NATURE, NATIVE PLANT RESOURCES

[HTTPS://WWW.INOURNATURE.CA/ONTARIO-NATIVE-PLANT-RESOURCES](https://www.inournature.ca/ontario-native-plant-resources)

NETWORK OF NATURE

[HTTPS://NETWORKOFNATURE.ORG/](https://networkofnature.org/)

TORONTO MASTER GARDENERS GUIDE

[HTTPS://WWW.TORONTOMASTERGARDENERS.CA/GARDENINGGUIDES/GARDENING-WITH-NATIVE-SHRUBS-A-TORONTO-MASTER-GARDENERS-GUIDE/](https://www.torontomastergardeners.ca/gardeningguides/gardening-with-native-shrubs-a-toronto-master-gardeners-guide/)

FOR BOOKS ON NATIVE PLANT GARDENING, TRY THE FOLLOWING:

THE GARDENER'S GUIDE TO NATIVE PLANTS OF THE SOUTHERN GREAT LAKES REGION BY RICK GRAY AND SHAWN BOOTH

A GARDEN FOR THE RUSTY-PATCHED BUMBLEBEE: CREATING HABITAT FOR NATIVE POLLINATORS: ONTARIO AND GREAT LAKES EDITION BY LORRAINE JOHNSON AND SHEILA COLLA

THE NEW ONTARIO NATURALIZED GARDEN BY LORRAINE JOHNSON

100 EASY-TO-GROW NATIVE PLANTS FOR CANADIAN GARDENS BY LORRAINE JOHNSON AND ANDREW LEYERLE

